

From aboard the Van-herring.

A

LETTER FROM LEGORN,

Decem. 1. 1679.

S I R,

YOU will receive herewith an incredible and unparallel'd Relation, which for the strangeness of it may seem rather a Romance than a Reality. So it is, that sundry of our Saylor's have Capitulated with the *Algerines*, and conspired together to kill the Captain, to betray the Ship, to make prize of the goods, and Slaves of our Persons. This cursed contrivance is wonderfully brought to light by two or three of their own Crew, who (touch't with remorse for so Hellish an Enterprize) have made an ingenuous confession of the whole Intrigue. When it was first suggested and revealed to some of our Principal Commanders, they took little notice of it. Whether it was from their incredulity, or because they themselves were in the Confederacy, I can't determine. At length an honest *Boatswaine*, being made privy to it, he took the Confession and the Examination of the first Discoverer, and carried it to the Captain and Council of Officers, who seemed to be startled at it, but made no great haste to enquire into it. This officiousness of the *Boatswaine* procur'd him the implacable hatred of the Conspirators; and some of them

A

them cunningly trepan'd him (one night) into one of their Cabbins, where they first strangled him, and then privately threw him over-board. Next day being mis'd, great enquiry was made after him, and after a while his dead Corps was found floating on the Sea. Some very confidently affirmed, that in discontent he had drown'd himself; but anon his dead Body being more narrowly viewed, it evidently appeared that he had been strangled; which made all conclude that he was Murthered by these Conspirators, either to strike terrour into others, or to satisfy their own revenge. This wicked Act had a good effect; his death quicken'd and alarum'd the Captain, the Commanders, and the generality of the Ships-Company. And now the Council is call'd together; the Discoverer of the formentioned Treachery is more fully Examined. He unravels the whole Mystery, and relates how there were on board the Ship a great many *Mahometans*, and mungrel Chistians, who held correspondence with the chief of *Algier*: and that their design was to bertay the Ship, to slay or enslave all those that made opposition; and because they apprehended the Captain was not for their turn, to take him out of the way. Further, that the *Algerines* had promised them their assistance, to furnish them with men, amunition and provision; as also to make their Lieutenant, Captain, who was a *Mahometan*, and true to their interest. He also accused five great Rogues amongst us, for having a hand in this Conspiracy, and who were to be Principal Officers in the Ship upon this Alteration. Several other persons he named as active managers of this Devilish Design, and told the very times when, and the places where they had their Consults, for the carrying of it on, and that he himself had been engaged and employed therein. Hereupon the Captain and Council seize the five persons before mentioned, and several others, and secure them in the Hold.

By this time two or three more of the Conspirators began to relent; one of them confest the Murther of the *Boatswaine*, and that he had a hand in it. This mightily confirmed the evidence of the first Discoverer, and convinced all disinterested persons of the reality of the Treachery. Whereupon the Discoverers (as there was reason) being pardoned, some few of those who were most active and forward in the Plot, and that had a hand in the *Boatswains* death, upon a full and fair hearing, were condemned and sentenc'd to death, and accordingly were hanged at the Main-yard. Only one of the Criminals (who had undertaken, as was clearly prov'd in the judgment of many unbiaffed persons who were present at the Tryal, to Poyson the Captain) a Chyrurgions Mate, chanc't to be quitted; who made haste (which was his wisest course) to get a Shore, and was never heard of since.

The discharge of this little Doctor greatly astonisht the Ships-Company, and no less animated the Conspirators. They presently give out, that there was no such Treacherous design in hand; that it was only a false and malicious forgery of two or three persons whom they loaded sufficiently with Calumnies. And one thing contributed greatly to their
con-

confidence; the Council, whilst they were very warm in searching into this Plot, and bringing the Offenders to condign punishment, and had declared the Lieutenant by his being a *Mahometan*, had given life to it; I say, whilst they were thus busied, they were broken up by the Captain upon some difference arising between them. And though to quiet the Saylor he hath summoned them twice or thrice since, yet when the time comes, he either wont let them sit, or dismisses them when they are just entered into their debates; suspecting that some of his Council may have some private design of their own.

This proceeding of the Captains, fills the Council and the whole Ships-Company too, with strange fears and jealousies, they know not what to think or say; but whatsoever the simple sort mutter, the wiser do conclude the Captain is Real and Cordial in his prosecution of the Conspirators, because he hath always professed himself to be a Christian, and the Conspirators have attempted to take away his Life; as also knowing that he will not be found out of his own Interest, for he can never expect a better Command in the Ship than he now hath; and if they should continue him so, it must be with the Impairing of his Honour, and Cur-tailing of his power. And though he wont suffer the Council to sit and Act, yet he himself is active for the preventing of this Plot. He hath posted many Orders upon the Main-mast, that all *Mahometans* shall leave the Ship. And though none of them stir, yet the reason is this, they have great Abettors, as the Lieutenant, the Captains Lady, &c. Besides they have a dispensation from the *Mufti*; and are allowed to conceal their Religion; yea in order to the saving of themselves, and carrying on of their design, to take any Tests or Oaths that are imposed upon them.

Yet notwithstanding (which is to me a Mystery) the Conspirators are much emboldened. The other day they had the Confidence to treat with some of the Discoverers to let fall their prosecution, to make a Recantation, and promised them great rewards for their so doing. And to invalidate the evidence of the first Discoverer, they raised several Scandals upon him; Yea they had suborned a *Moor* that waited upon him to swear that he would have buggered him in his Cabbin. Nay, they had the face to invent and feign a new Plot; which was, that the honest Saylor were about to make head against the Captain, and to run away with the Ship to the Common-wealth of *Venice*. The Lieutenant sent one to the Captain with an Information about this Sham-plot; which was at first believed, but it was so simply managed, that every *Tarpaulin* could see through it. Whereupon he that was mainly employed in the carrying of it on, did ingenuously acknowledg, that he had abused the honest Saylor, imposed upon the credulous Captain, and that he was set a work by some of the Principal Conspirators.

In this distressed posture we abide, and see no hope of deliverance. A day or two ago, some Merchants who have a considerable adventure aboard the Ship, addrest themselves to the Captain, and prayed (in most
humble

humble manner) that he would consider of the present danger they were in, and suffer the Council to sit, to find out a way (if it were possible) to prevent their utter Ruin. He bad them meddle with what belonged to them, they should let him alone to govern the Ship; who was as solicitous about her safety as the best of them all.

The Saylor's also were about a Petition to the same purpose, which coming to the Captains ear, he exprest his dislike of it, which very much saddens the hearts of the Saylor's.

I remember how they received the Captain when he came first aboard; they tost up their Caps, and cryed, God bless the Captain, wee'l live and dye with him, one and all; one and all, &c. And still they have that respect for him, that they vow if he be taken away by any undue means, they will revenge his death upon all the *Mahometans* aboard the Ship. And indeed there is no great fear of them: for they are but few in comparison. The great fear is that the *Algerines*, the next fair wind, will fall upon us in our Harbour; and to speak the truth, we are but ill provided to defend our selves. But yet the Ship is as stout a Ship as any Sails the Seas, and we are very well mann'd. And the Seamen are full both of Rage and Courage; So that if ever they attack us, they may possibly find hot work of it, and come short home.

FINIS.
